

Farm Bill Forum -October 1, 2005, Berlin, CT.

Comments on Policy Questions-

#4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

Farm policy which directs and supports technical and financial conservation programs which mitigate degradation of our finite natural resources must be continued. The historical measure of our society is, and will be, defined by how the United States uses or abuses its natural resources as well as its societal resources. Careful, sustainable use of our natural resources based on science is Conservation. We must continue to educate our ever more diverse population guiding agricultural production about conservation systems and practices which prevent or at least limit harm to our resources. To this end I believe it is important for USDA to continue offering Title 12 Conservation Programs that cost share on installation of systems/practices and help pay for farmland easements. It is important to stand behind these programs with the best technical information USDA can provide. The Conservation Technical Assistance Program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is model of providing information on wise use of natural resources to interested citizens. It should continue as a source of timely education to our farm community and others making land use decisions.

I would add that a new farm bill should include more serious consideration to development of new and better energy sources for agricultural needs and that of the public. There needs to be less reliance on the world's oil. Energy conservation on the farms and on produce movement to markets will be increasingly important. Our rail road infrastructure should be upgraded to replace some long distance road transportation. The increase in use of ethanol is a wise move.

Our Very Best Opportunity to show Real Leadership as a world nation may just be to demonstrate Conservation and Lead through innovation. The next Farm Bill could focus on that.

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